

The argument vpon the fyrst

Epistle of the apostle. S. Iohn by Erasmus
of Rotterdam.

Fol. xlii.



That this is Saincte Iohn the apostles epistle, whiche wrote the Gospell, the very stile of the wordes selfe is a playne argument. He maketh muche a dooe in the reherfall of light and darkenes, life and death, hate and loue, in often repeatinge the wordes, as though they were taken out of the sayinge nexte befoze. Of the whiche sorte (to open my saying more plainly by example) this is one: *Loue not the vworlde, neither those things that are in the vworlde.* Yf any manne loue the vworlde, the loue of the father is not in hym, for all that is in the vworlde &c. And anon after: *He is not of the father, but of the vworlde: and the vworlde passeth awaye.* How often here is the worlde rehearsed: fynally in all hys sayinge there is lesse compendypous shortenes, and more open plainesse than in the writinge of the reste of the apostles. And as for the epistle, it is more evidently plaine, than nedeth any argumente, like as the two Epistles folowinge are, whiche are ascribed to one Iohn a certayne senior, and not to Iohn the apostle.

Thus endeth the Argumente.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon on the firste Epistle of Sainct Iohn.

The fyrste Chapter.

That which was from the beginning, which we haue herd, which we haue sene with our eyes, which we haue looked vpon, and our handes haue handled, of the worde of the lyfe. And the lyfe appeared, and we haue sene and beare witnes, and shewe vnto you that eternall life, whiche was with the father, and appeared vnto vs. That whiche we haue sene and heard, declare we vnto you, that ye also maye haue felowshipp with vs, and that our felowshipp maye be with the father and his sonne Iesus Christ. and thus wrote we vnto you, that (ye maye reioyce, and that) your ioye maye be full.

The text.



We write not vnto you, dearely beloved brethren, of slender or meane thinges, or of thinges vnknown, but of a newe matter: howbeit so newe vnto vs, that with God it was from euerlasting. This is the worde of God, euen Iesus Christe bothe God and manne: whiche where he was alwayes the sonne of God, woulde of late be the sonne of a mayden: and which after hys diuine nature was invisible to mans eyes, vouchesafed to take vpon hym an humayne bodye: and did vouchesafe to be sampliarly counterfaunte among men, that he might carpe vs vp from the darkenes of our ignorance to the lycht of Gospellike

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pellike knowlage: and that we myght begynne to beholde him with the eyes of our mynde, whome we haue presently sene with the eyes of our bodye. In dede the vnbelefe of mannes harte required, that the truthe shoulde bee credited by grosse outward experymentes: but yet the godlynes of them is moze pfectred by his owne worde, whiche where they nether had sene him with theyr eyes, ne handled him with theyr handes, yet were moste certaynly perswaded and beleued that he is the sonne of God, and thonly auoz of mannes saluacyon. It is our parte therfoze, to declare that, whiche we haue moste certaynly proued by our bodily senses, vnto those that chaunced not to see it, and yet it is expdyent to beleue, that none ought to trust to haue life, nor euerlastinge saluacion, but he that belcueth the Gospelles doctrine, wherof we are both witnesses and preachers. It is not the worde of manne, nether of lyght importauce, but it is the worde of God, and of heauen, that geueth euerlastyng lyfe to them, which geue obedient hearyng vnto it: and deliuctyng from the deathe of synnes, from what so euer relygyon, from what so euer kynde of lyfe they shall turne them selues vnto it. Of this matter y we speake of we speake of most assured credence, y is to wete, euen the thing which we y were continual waitours heard with our eares saw with our eyes, nether sawe we afarre of, or passyng by, but we looked presently on to the full. And to cause a thinge to be credited, these are two princypall chief senses, and if that also bee but a small matter, we did not only heare hym teaching, prayyng, commaundyng wyndes and deuilles, and the father sondry tymes bearing witness vnto the sonne, and we sawe hym not only worke myracles, suffre deathe and ryls agayne: but also we haue handled with these handes of oures. For whan he was rylen agayne from deathe, to thynente to make vs beleue stedfastlye that he was no vayne phantasie, but euen the same manne alpye agayne, whome we had sene befoze dead, he caused vs to handle him with our handes, and lapyng to our fyngres he shewed vs the places of his woundes. Manne kynde was deade, by cause it was in thraldome of vices and synnes: and he suffred deathe for our wickednes, that throughe his goodnesse we myght lyue vnto Innocence. We were in doubt also our selues, whan we sawe hym dead, whan we sawe hym buried, but whan he rose againe from death, he gaue vs sure hope of life. Manne kynde had had no maner of hope of eternall life, except he had caused vs to see him with oure eyes, and if he had not plucked awaye all doubtfulnes fro vs, by most manifestly apparent experymentes. He beinge manne suffred paynes for our synnes, and the same beinge God dooeth frely geue immortall lyfe to them that put theyr saythfull trust in hym. He lyued alwayes with the father, and this life was alwayes determinately purposed for vs by the sonne, howbeit this counsaile was not yet publyshed vnto the world, albeit the nacion of the Jewes (and yet none but they) looked for it by the prophetes oracles, as it were in a dycame. In the meane while deathe reigned, lyfe laye hydden. Some fixed theyr hope in Moses, some in worldly wysdome, but the saluacion and life of all people was Iesus Christe, the worde of God the father, the teacher of Innocence, and the geuer of Immortalitie. For none lyueth, but he that lyueth godly, nether dooeth any escape deathe, but he that attayneth Immortalitie. At length thys (Iesus christe) manifested him selfe vnto the world by hym selfe, shewing him selfe playnly to all the senses of man, and so thrustyng him selfe in to the consciences of menne. And therfoze he would haue vs to be lokers on and witnesses of all thinges, that he did on earthe, to thynente

chintent they myght be faithfully published by our preachinge throughout all the whole vniuersall worlde: that like as we by Iesus haue obteyned lyfe and saluacion, in case we perseuer still in the Gospelles doctrine, euen so shoulde you also come with vs in to the felowshippe and company of this saluacion, in case you geue credence to our witnesse bearing, concerning the thinge that you neither hearde nor sawe of hym, but learne it by our preachinge. We are nether bayne witnesses ne yet vncommaunded. He bad vs to bee faithfull witnesses, and we recorde vnto all men with the greate daunger of our head, none other thinge than we haue most euident experyence of, with all the senses of the bodye. We are happye, in that our eares and eyes haue made vs beleue, and yet you are neuertheles happye, if you geue credence vnto hys witnesse bearers. Our faith hath glued vs vnto Christe, and made vs the children of God and members of Christe: And your faith also shall engraffe you vnto the same bodye, that beinge ioyned with vs in the felowshippe of faith, you myght make one bodye. And so shall it come to passe, that we shall not only bee all of one mynde amonge our selues, as the members of one bodye, but we shall also haue peace and league with Iesus Christe, and by hym with God hys father, from whome we were before farre different: that like as the sonne is at moste perfite consent & communion of all thinges with the father, euen so we also by perfite agreement of the profession of the Gospell shoulde bee heaped together in to one bodye of Christe, to be made partakers of all the goodes of our heade. I know you are ioyous of so happye a felowship, but yet I put you in remembraunce agayne of these thinges in wyting, to chintent you myght reioyce moze fully, if euery manne be not all together ioyous of hys owne saluacion, but all mens felicitie make euery one glad. For thys dooeth christen charitie cause, that euery manne must be as glad of other mennes comodities, as of his owne. The moe that this felicitie is commune vnto, the moze abundaunt shall euery ones ioye bee. Among vs there shall no beinge of one mynde stande together substantially, excepte we be fast glued together with mutuall charitie. We canne not possibly haue peace with God, except we be answerably like vnto our head Iesus Christe: what so euer he hath, he ascribeth it vnto the father: and what so euer we haue, it behoueth vs to ascribe it vnto Christe. Christe is the true lycht that procedeth from the father of all lycht. We canne not bee the members of Christe except we bee bright: nether canne we haue lycht, onles we bee transformed into hym, and contynue stedfastly vnto the ende in his felowshipp. Truth and Innocencye is the lycht of the mynde, and synnes and wycked lustes are the darkenes: where lycht is, there is life: where darkenes are, there death is.

And this is the thynges which we haue heard of hym and declare vnto you, that God is light, and in hym is no darkenes at all. If we saie, that we haue felowship with hym, and walke in darkenes, we lye, and do not the truth. But and if we walke in light euen as he is in light, then haue we felowship with hym, and the blood of Iesus Christ his sonne clenseth vs from all synne. If we saie that we haue no synne, we deceaue our selues, and the truth is not in vs. If we knowlege our synnes, he is saythfull and iust to forgiue vs oure synnes, and to clense vs from all vnrighewesnes. If we say, we haue not synned, we make hym a lyar, and by sothe he is not in vs.

The text.

What is the matter than, whiche we shewe vnto you, that you myght the moze fully reioyce? In dede it is that, whiche we haue heard euen of hym, and
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hauing heard it we make it comūne vnto you: that God, forasmuch as he is all together and of his own nature good, all wise, all pure, and all light & life, nether is ther any darkenes in him. In vs the matter standeth not after such sorte, but we haue muche darkenes euen of our selues: in case we haue any light, we are indebted in that all together vnto him, by whose free liberality we are deliuered from our olde synnes, and being deliuered from the darkenes of our former ignoraunce we haue learned by the Gospelles doctrine to liue godly after Chyriste our he ades example. If any manne boast, that he is through baptisme engrafed to the body of Chyriste, and hath therby felowshippe with God the father: where as in the meane while he liueth yet in errours & vices of hys former lyfe, dooeth playnly lye. For seing (as I sayed before) God is farre from all maner felowship of darkenes: how can he possibly haue any thyng a doo with hym, that lyueth yet still all together in errour and olde vices? For he is clene out of the waye, that thinketh he can attayne Innocencie by any other meanes than by Chyriste: agayne he is deceaued, that thinketh it ynough for him to be washen in baptisme, except he be answerably like vnto his professio through Innocencie of life: he that thinketh thus, is deceaued, and he lieth that sayeth it. For Chyriste is the trūeth, whiche hath nothing a doo with lyes. The fyrste steppe vnto light, is for a manne to acknowlage his darkenes: and the fyrst stepping forth of a manne vnto Innocencie, is to acknowlage his synnes. Will ye heare therfore, by what token we maye knowe, that we haue true felowshippe with God? Doubtles euen by this: if like as he is light, and vopde of all darkenes, euen so shall we absteyne after his example from the darkenes of all errours and vices, frampng all our conuersacion after the light of the Gospel: and yf like as the sonne hath the most high concord with the father: euen so shoulde we also lyue Innocently and be all of one mynde amonge our selues. The father will not laye the transgressions of our olde life vnto our charge, whiche are ones doone awaye all the sorte of them by the precious blood of his sonne Iesu Chyriste, so that we from henceforth absteyne from all synne, as muche as in vs lyeth. The blood of Chyriste hath washed awaye all synnes, and hath washen it awaye from all folkes: yea but he hath washen none but those that acknowlage theyr faultes. Yf we saye that we are not endaugered with synne, we deceaue our selues, we lyue in errour, we wandie in darkenes: and Chyriste, whiche is light, whiche is trūeth, is not in vs. For if he were truly in vs in dede, he would dispatche awaye thys darkenes of arrogaunt ignoraunce. And if it shall chaunce vs after receyving of baptisme, to slide backe agayne through mannes weaknes in to any synne, and as it were a myste obscure our light: we muste beware, that arrogauncie withdraue vs not farther and farther of, and leade vs agayne from light in to our olde darkenes. Yea we muste geue diligence, that through discrete sobrenes we maye be admioued vnto the light that shall dispatche awaye all darknes. If the brother perchance doo trespasse agaynste the brother, let either forguee other hys trespasse, that God maye forguee them also the trespasses that are done agaynste him. For in dede God hath vpon this condicion promysed to forguee vs; what so euer we haue offended agaynste him, if we forguee our brothers fault: and extacteth hys debte (euen to the vttermoste farthinge) of him, whiche hauyng hys lord mercifull vnto him, shewed him selfe small mercifull towards his felowe seruaunt: that is to saye, he iudgeth him vnwoorthye the mercye of God seinge he ones frely forgauē

forgaue him all his trespasses, that will not pardone a smale offence vnto hym, agaynst whome he eyther trespasseth euery daye, or elles maye trespass. That man wyl easily forgaue hym that trespasseth agaynste hym, whiche wyl remembre howe many wayes he offendeth both agaynst God and agaynst his neyghbour: And as it is a very hard matter for a man to do so as he offende in nothing, euen so is it a verye easye mater to amende suche offences with forgeuing one an other. forgeue thou thy neyghbour, and thy neyghbour shall forgeue thee agayne: and God shall, euen as it were of very couenaunt, forgeue you both. I speake of those faultes, that chaunce euen among them that are good, yea but among men: and those faultes, that obscure the lyght of the Gospelles veritie, rather than extinguysh it. For God forbydde, that man laughter, or whooredome, or sacrilege shoulde chaunce vpon their life, that are ones chosen among the chyl- dzen of God. There is nothing that allureth more the mercie of God, and swagereth his wraath, than yf a man acknowlage his faulte to God. If he that is a fearce cruel man forgeue him that acknowlageth his faulte, how muche more shall God do so, which is more mercifull than any man: he is by nature readyly bent vnto mercie, and hath promised vs forgeuenes by: on this condicion: *forgeue, and it shalbe forgeuen vnto you.* If he would not for- geue, in that he is good: yet he shuld forgeue because he is iust & of faithfull credence. See that thou accomplishe the prescribed condicion, and he shal not forget his couenaunt. If we with our whole harte forgeue our neig- bour that offendeth vs, God shall also forgeue vs, not onely one synne or an other, but all synnes: so that we to our powers geue diligence, that we may be once boyde of all vices. And yf we be not able fully to attayne vnto that for the frayltie of mannes body, yet he of his liberal free goodnes shal make good, that is wantynge in our strengthes, and shall cleanse vs from all our offences, who perchaunce suffereth some tokens of our olde former lyfe to remayne stil in vs, for this purpose, that we shoulde acknowlage our weakenes. For in dede he is better content with a sinner that misliketh him selfe, than with a righteous that ma standeth in his own conceite. He would that þ saluacion of men shoulde be ascribed vnto his mercy, and not to our merytes. And nowe hathe he testified, that there is no mortall manne on yearth, but he offendeth in some thyng. And yf we wyl say, that we haue no synne in vs, we make wod a lyar, and say agaynst hym: and he that gaynes sayeth hym must nedes lye.

The.ii. Chapter.

My litle children, these thynges wyte I vnto you, that ye synne not. And yf any manne The xxxi. synne, we haue an aduocate with the father, Iesus Christ the righteous: and he it is that obtey- neth grace for our synnes: not for our synnes onely, but also for the synnes of all the world. And hereby we are sure that we know hym, yf we kepe his commaundementes. He that sayeth, I knowe hym, and keperh not his commaundementes, is a lyar, and the verytic is not in hym. But whoso keperh his worde, in hym is the loue of God perfecte in dede: hereby we know that we are in hym. He that sayeth, he abyberh in hym, ought to walke as he walkes.

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These thynges do I wyte, my lytle childzen, not that synne should be comitted the moze licenciouslye vpon truste of the mercye that is ordayned, but that no man shoulde synne at all, as muche as in vs lyeth. After that Christ hath once forgiven vs all oure transgressions, it is requisite for vs to applie al our studious endeouours to this ende, that we may kepe innocencie vndefiled. And yet if it chaunce vs to slide backe agayne into any synne, ther is no cause why we should despayre of forgiveness, we haue God irreteable, & with hym we haue a louing patrone & a trusty, who being the sonne, obteyneth whatsoeuer he wyll of the father, and witheth hartelye woe vnto vs: which gaue hymselfe to saue vs, so that we do vtterly and from the bo:ome of our heartes mislike our selues, and geue our diligence agayne to better. He alone hath nothing to be pardoned of, and he it is that maketh intercession for the synnes of his membres, and reconcileth the father (whiche is offended) vnto vs, and causeth hym to bee mercyfull vnto vs: & not vnto vs onely, which haue now embraced his doctrine, but also vnto all mankynde vniuersally, yf they with a syncre hearte confesse themselves to be sinners, and purpose to leade an innocente lyfe, and so purposed go on for ward, and kepe it substancially. For baptisme doeth not make vs free from the obseruacion of Moses law for that purpose, that we shoulde synne afterwarde licenciously without punishment, but that we shoulde moze firmly stycke to the loue of the Gospell, whiche causeth moze to bee done of the wyllynge, than so many lawes of Moses gette perforce of the cōstrayned. He comāunded many thynges in a smal towne, that comāuded men to loue their neighbours, euen as he dyd vs. He diueth not vs to loue hym agayne, but he enticeth vs, he prouoketh vs, he kindleth vs. Whosoever knoweth God aright, cannot choise but loue hym behemētly. For euery onethat professeth God with hys mouthe, knoweth not God: but he that is kyndled with the flame of gospellyke charitie, and doeth wyllynglye and gladly, that whiche he dyd perfitey before, that we do good euen vnto our enemies, and that for the saluacion of our neyghbour we wyll not stycke to stand in dainger of our life, he declareth hymselfe to know god. But & if a mā make hys boaste, that he knoweth god, in that, that he beinge taught hys principles hath learned the misteries of the fayth, in that beinge baptised he hath professed his name, neither for al that foloweth the example of his charitie, he is a lyar, neither hath he yet fully learned to knowe God, in as muche as god is not knowen, excepte faythe be garnished with charitie. And whosoever is a lyar, Christ whiche is the very trueth selfe, dwelleth not in hym: and whosoever hath not Christ dwelling in hym, is not a liuely membre of his body. Faith without loue is a bayne matter and a deade. To bee short, loue is not idle, it omitteth none of those thynges, that it knoweth be acceptable vnto hym whō it loueth. Christ sayd he would not acknowlage hym to be his disciple, that woulde not take vp his crosse and folow hym, walkyng in þ foresteppes of perfite charitie. Therfore he that obserueth his saying, declareth in dede that he holdeth fast the perfite and ryght euangelical charitie. By trial herof we shal know, that we are in his body, & that we haue receyued hys spirit. Wherto doest þ make thy vaunt, as a mēbre of Christe, in that thou art through baptisme receyued into the flock of christiāns? It is not an idle professiō, it is a not finefingred professiō.

It is not the profession that maketh a true membze of Chryste, but the imitation. He that professeth with his mouthe that he is regenerate in Chryst, must walke in his fote-steppes. He lyued not to him selfe, he died not for himselfe: He gaue himselfe wholly for vs, he dyd good to all folkes, he gaue no reuilyngge worde agayne to any man, but whan he was nayed on the crosse, he prayed to the father for them that spake reuilyngly agaynste him. This is the gospellike and perfite charitie, whiche they ought to folowe in their dedes, that professe them selues to be Chrystes disciples.

Barthol. I write no newe commaundement vnto you: but that olde commaundemēt, which ye haue had from the beginning. The olde commaundement is the worde, wh. ch ye haue heard from the beginning. Agayne, a newe commaundement I write vnto you, that is true in hym, and the same is true also in you: for the darkenes is past, and the true lighte nowe appereth. He that saith herve that he is in the lyght, and yet hateth his brother, is in darkenes euen vntill this tyme. He that loueth his brother, abydeth in the lyght, and there is none occasion of euill in him. He that hateth his brother, is in darkenes, and walketh in darkenes: and can not tell whether he goeth, because that darkenes hath blynded his eyes.

Dearely beloued, thys commaundement of charite, that I wypte vnto you, is no newe commaundemente, but euen Moses lawe declared it long agoe, or rather Chryste by it, whiche renewed his commaundement in the gospell: and so renewed it, that he made it peculiarly his owne. *This (quod he) is my commaundement, that you shoulde loue one another, as I haue loued you.*

Therfoze it is neither any newe commaundement, neither my commaundement, that I geue now vnto you, ne yet suche a one as you haue not heard of hitherto, but it is the selfe same commaundemente, that we gaue vnto you by and by in the begynnynge by thautozytie of Chryste. And yet agayne the same is newe that I write nowe vnto you. It was an olde commaundement, but it is brought out of vse through the maners of the people.

The Jewes learned by heart: *Thou shalt loue the Lorde thy God, thou shalt loue thy neighbour*, but yet euery one serued his own gaine. Chryst renewed thys vnto vs, yea and loued vs more than himselfe, and he loued not his neighbours, but he loued his enemies, yea those that turned waywardly from him and that were worthy of euyl. This albeit I knowe you haue heard of, long ago, yet it ought to be renewed from tyme to tyme with often rehearsal, that it maye sticke the more depely in youre mynde, seing it is the chief matter of the gospelles profession. This was a true commaundement in Chryst, which performed in dede the thyng that he taughte: but it was not true in you, as long as you hated your neighbour, as long as you recompenced euill worde for euill worde, and wrong for wrong. But now it is true in you also, synce the true sprong by lighte of the gospelles doctrine hath dispatched awaye þe darkenes of your former life, & hath taught that none is acceptable, but he that would loue the good for Chrystes sake, & loue the also that are bad to this ende, that they should be couerted vnto Chryst. Those that folowe this doctrine, walke in lyghte, & offende not in the darkenes of euill lustes. The hate of the neighbour powreth darkenes into the mynd. Therfoze he that is so washē and so hath professed Chryst, that he geneth not ouer to hate his brother, he is deceaued in beleuyngge that he walketh in light, where he is yet in darkenes. For God remitteth not him, & forgueth not his brother. For it is not ynoughe to haue geuen ouer theft, whozedom & murdre, in baptysme, except al hallowhartednes be also plucked quite out of þe mynd, & in stede of hate, charitie come in place.

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He that contynueth still in the loue of hys neyghbour, abydeth in lychte, which is Christ Iesus, and stumblcth not as walking in darknes: for true charitie is so farre of from hurtyng any body, that it suffreth all thynges, and turneth all thynges into good. Contrarywyse he that hateth his brother, although he haue geuen ouer to offer vnto images, although he haue geue ouer to be an vniour or a churche robber, yet he is styl in darkenes, & seruing his owne blynde lustes he walketh in darkenes: neyther seeth he the strayght waye vnto saluacion, although the gospell thynne clearly vpon him. And all is long of the darkenes of the hate of his brother, that hath so blynded his eyes. Where hate reigneth, there is the iudgement blynde.

Exhort.

Babes, I write vnto you howe that your sinnes are forgouen you for his names sake. I write vnto you fathers, howe that you haue knowen him that is from the beginning. I write vnto you yongmen, howe that ye haue overcome that wicked. I write vnto you lytle children, howe that ye haue knowen the father. I haue writen vnto you fathers, howe that ye haue knowen him that is from the beginning. I haue writen vnto you yonge men, howe that ye are strong, and the worde of god abydeth in you, and ye haue overcome that wicked. Se that ye loue not the world, nerher the thinges that are in the world. If any man loue the world, the loue of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world (as the lust of the fleshe, and the lust of the eyes and the prude of life) is not of the father, but of the world. And the world passeth awaye, and the lust therof: but he that fulfilleth the will of God, abydeth for euer.

I loue you euen as a mother loueth her children, and write for that purpose, partlie reioycyng at your felicitie, partly exhortyng you to goe forward better and better. I reioyce at you, as my most deare children, whom I haue begotten agayne by the sede of the gospels doctrine vnto Christ, in that the synnes of your former lyfe are pardoned you, and freely pardoned you, for none other cause, but because you haue professed the name of the lorde Iesu Christe, that you shoulde also remembre after his example frelye to forgiue euerye one his neyghbour. I write vnto you, whom not so muche the processe of age as the grauitie of maners and godly carefulnesse to wardes them that be yonger, doeth make worthe the name of fathers: reioyceing in you, that you are not onely endued with a commune maner of wisdom, wherby olde men are commended almost because of the experyence of thinges, and geue the better counsel to the ignoraunte yong folkes, but in that you haue reknowledged Iesus Christe the autoz of saluacion: whiche not onely is of a greate olde age, but also hath bene alwayes wyth the father. You being of great age knowe him that is eternal: and the more fully you knowe him, so much the more diligently you preache him to them that be of slenderer age. Olde folkes do remembre and kepe in mynde many olde auncient thynges, and you kepe him in mynde that was before al age. I write vnto you yongmen which through the strength of faith haue overcome that wicked & vnruely Satan. The comune sorte of yongmen thinketh themselues happie in that they geue lightly place to no mā because of their bodily strength. But you are more happie, that by reason of youre strength of mynde, you could be overcome, neither with enticementes of voluptuous pleasures, ne w any terrours of þ world. Other mens actiuitie flourisheth in barrail, but your actiuitie hath flourished more nobly against the assaultes of deuils, the fleshe, & the world. I write vnto you childre, which although for tendernes of your yeares, you are not skilled as yet in þ knowlage of worldly matters, yet you haue already attained the thig, þ getteth you euerlastig felicitie. In other childre it is þ first special tokē of wit, if they acknowledge theyz

theire father, but you knowe your heauenly father, by whom you are regenerate vnto heauen. Let euery one maynteyne that he hath, and encrease in that he hath. For this cause sake, I bothe reioyce in euery one, and also warne all and euery orders and states of you, that acknowledgeng your felicitie, you geue thanks to God youre autour, and hauyng in remembrance, whither you must go, pzeare alwayes fozeuarde vnto more perfeccio. I wil rehearse it vnto you therfoze, that ye can not fozeget it. I haue written vnto you fathers, for you knowe him which hath neyther beginnyng nor endyng, that the desyre of this lyfe shoud in no wyse stiere you, seyng you make haste to the life that neuer shal haue ende. I haue written vnto you yongmen, because you haue ouercome the ruffynge nyctene of youth through the valiaunt strengthe of mynde, and because you haue with a constaume heart kepte the worde of the Gospell, and haue by the helpe of Christ, ouercome the Deuill the continuall enemye of mankynde. Continue you still in victozye, condemne still that whiche you haue hitherto condemned, and loue more and more that you haue begon to loue. The worlde enticeth by false imaginacions of transitoye goodes, and frayeth with a bayne and false shewe of euilles. As for you, let those thinges fraye you whiche are euill in dede, and neuer haue ende. And let those thinges catche you that are good in dede and knowe none ende. Followe the lyght of the gospell and loue heauenly thynges, whiche the heauenlye father promyseth, vnto whom you are regenerate by Christ. flee the darknes of naughtie lusses, wherby this worlde layeth bayte with countrefaict goodes. It can not possiblie be, that you can loue bothe at ones, nor serue both at ones. There is none agreement betwene God and the worlde, there is no concord betwene lyght and darknes: whosoener loueth the worlde, swaruethe from the loue of God the father. I speake not of this worlde, which god made, wherin we liue, wil we nil we. The wiked gredy desires of bayne thinges (wherein the common sort of menne repose their felicitie, fozegetting the thinges that are truly good in dede) I cal the worlde. It is not the place, howe farre of so euer it be, not the raymente, not the meate, not the ritle, that exempteth you fro the worlde, but a mind that is pure fro those desires þ I spake of. And what hath this worlde, that is not noisomly hurtful? There are thre thinges, þ it most chesely deceiueth folishe & vncircumspect folkes withall: the voluptuous pleasure of the fleche, enticementes of the eyes, and hyghe statelynes and proude galauntnes of lyfe. for it obiecteth certayne iugginges of bayne pleasures to clawe the senses of the bodye withall for a tyme, that the mynde maye in the meane while be called awaye from the studie of heauenlye good thynges. For the desyre of suche maner of good thynges, the heauenlye spirite suggesteth, whom God the father geueth vnto his childre that are truly regenerate by Christ. The deuill hath also a spirite of his owne, by whom he suggesteth a pernicious loue of thynges neyther true nor durable, vnto them that haue bent themselues throughe vnto this worlde. He suggesteth the naughtye fortes of lechery, to tulle the membres of the bodye withal through a folishe and a filthy itching delite. He suggesteth the delite of fyne meates & drinke to please þ paunche & the mouth wale. He suggesteth the swetnes of idlenes & slepe, that the mynde may waxe the more sluggishe throughe custome.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the .i. Epistle

He suggesteth wanton songes and shameles fables, to annoynt the eares withall. He suggesteth the wanton enticementes of beawties and sondry kyndes of thynges to beholde, to delite the eyes withall. He suggesteth the pompes and ioyfullie of riches, the occasions of ambition. Finally he allureth mannes myndes on euery parte awaye from the true and euerlasting good thynges, vnto the vayne imaginacions of good thynges. Let him that is entangled with the desire of these thynges, knowe that he is not moued by the spirite of the heauenly father, but by the spirite of the worlde. The worlde, lyke as it consisteth vpon elementes that endure but for a time, euen so geueth it nothing but that whiche shall shortly perishe. God, like as he is eternall, euen so geueth he freely euerlasting rewardes. Therefore he that dependeth vpon the succours of the worlde, foloweth a certayne felicitie that is both vayne and shall shortly be taken awaie, which, euen casualtie that comureth vnthought vpon, plucketh awaye in this worlde, or at lest age dispatcheth it. Truly, death that shall come vnto euery man, plucketh quite awaye al the dreame of false pleasures. When the matter is taken awaye, the pleasure perissheth, and sorowes come in place. When the man is taken awaye, al is gone to naught, and euerlasting torment cometh in place. But he that obeierh vnto the father that calleth him vnto the loue of an heauenly lyfe, his felicitie shall neuer haue ende. For he that geueth it, knoweth none ende. The vnhurtfull commodities of this worlde are to be vsed for the tyme, yea but small ye, but moderately, to the necessitie of nature, not to the voluptuousse fulfylling of pleasure. But the chiefe studye of mynde ought to be turned to the thynges that be eternall, whereunto the vse of all other thynges ought also to be referred.

The text.

Ittill children, it is the last time: and as ye haue hearde howe that Antichrist shall come, euen nowe are there many begonne to be Antichristes already: whereby we knowe, that it is the last tyme. They went out from vs, but they were not of vs. For yf they had bene of vs they would no doubt, haue continued with vs. But that it might appeare, that they were not of vs. Accerthles, ye haue an oymment of him that is holy, and ye knowe all thynges. I haue not written vnto you, as though ye knewe not the trueth: but as though ye knewe it, and knowe also, that no lye commeth of truceh. Who is a lyar, but he that denieth that Iesus is Christe? the semets Antichriste, that denieth the father and the sonne. Whosoouer denieth the sonne, the same hath not the father, he that knowledgeth the sonne, hath the father also. Let therefore abyde in you that same which ye heard from the begynnynge.

The felicitie of godly men doeth not yet appeare, but it shall be manifestly opened in the commynge of our Lorde Iesu Christ. The wicked seme to lyue in the meane time swetely here in this worlde, but euerlasting sorowe ha ngeth ouer them and that shortly. For the laste tyme semeth to be present, wherin (the course of thynges being turned bpsyde downe,) those shall rayne with Christe, that are tormented nowe for Christes sake: and they shall be brought to naught, whiche be nowe rebelles agaynst Christe. You haue hearde that Antichrist shall come, who being armed with all the mayntenance and iugglinges of this worlde, shoulde kepe warre against Christe, and by and by when Antichriste is ouercommie againe, the body of Christe shall be deliuered from all euils, and the members of the deuill shall be laden with the burthens of all euilles. Therefore the commynge of thys Antichrist, (of whom the Apostles tolde you before) semeth not to be farre

of. For thys worlde hath so muche preuayled agaynst the doctrine of the Gospel, that there are begonne euen now all readye to be a great soye, that deserue the name of Antichrist, whose lyfe and doctrine and all theyr whole study is agaynst Christ. For what appeare they to be eiles, thā Antichristes gentlemen hushers, and the last tokens of the plage to come? For they do lesse hurt vnto Christes people that be vtterly straungers from Christ, than those that being ones conuersaunt in his castelles, and by and by become runneagates, assault Christe with Coyntes owne garisons and armour. For they countrefaite euen those thinges, whiche declare in christians, the vertue, the holynes, the doctrine, the auctoritie, the miracles of Christ. And in dede they went out of vs, howbeit there is no matter, why they should much trouble you, they were conuersaunt among vs, but they were none of ours. They were enemies of Christe, euen when they were dwelling in his castelles. But and if they had truly bene on our syde, they would haue continued stil to thende with vs. They professed Christ in title and behauiour, but in their mynde they loued the worlde vehemently. And therfore when it is come to the stormes of persecucions, whan it is come to the flame of afflictions, they haue shewed theselues, what they were before. Nowe they are out from vs, they extolle vs, as a body ouerlaid with euil humours, and now being open enemies they shall lesse hurt, than holwe harted companions. Thus it was Christes wyll, that it may evidently appeare, that all belonge not to the bodye of Christe, that are washen in his name, that professe his name, and are partakers of the sacramentes of the Churche. A true and stedfast despising of the worlde sheweth a man to be a Christian. A mynde that is vnbroken and vnconquered agaynst al wanton enticemētes, agaynst all iniuries, sheweth a man to be a Christian. He that vpon occasion thynketh from the doctrine of Christe, dyd countrefaite a christianne, but he was no christian. In dede it is expedient that they be openly seperated from vs, lest in ourward appearaunce seming to be good, they should do the moze harme to them that are not ware. Although they were not vnknowen vnto you, yea before they withdrew themselves openly. For the buccion of Christ, wherof you are also named, that is to saye the inspiracion of the spirite of Christ, sheweth playnly ynough who are true christians, and who are not. For he that is a spirituall man, iudgeth al thynges. They were not vnknowen, but they were borne with al, if perchance they woulde repent. It is true that I saye: neither doe I wyte these thinges vnto you, as though you were ignoraunt of the tructh, seyng you haue the spirite of Christ to your teacher, which suffereth you not to be ignoraunt of any thing: but I put you in remembraunce of the thyng that you know, to thintent you myght þ more surely sicke vnto the tructh, and not to be disquieted whan sorowes do happen. You are the fewer, but you are the sounder, you are the moze purely censed, you are the quieter. Nothing is taken away of the body, though the botche be launced, though the corrupt matter be runne out. You knowe that Christ is the tructh, and all kynde of lyeng is cleane contrarie to him. Whosoever is an holo wharted dissembler, with him Christe hath nothing a doe, howe faste so euer he professe him with his mouthe. There are manye fashons of lyenges. He that is a lyar, by what maner waye soeuer it be, deniech Christe, whiche is

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the truth, and receyueth no mixture of any kinde of lye. He that is agaynst the truth, is agaynst Christ: he that is agaynst Christe is Antichrist. And there is none more wicked a kynde of lyeing, than to denye that Iesus is Christ: and that do many false prophetes of the Jewes, whiche denie hym to be he, whom Moses and the prophetes oracles did long agoe promise vnto the worlde to be the reuenger, and auoz of saluacion: and promyse an other Antichrist I wote not whom, in stede of Christe. Doubtes who so euer is such a one, is playne Antichrist. Agayne there are, that although they professe with their mourthe, that Iesus is Christe, yet they lye after such sorte, as though his doctrine were vayne, as though the rewardes that he hath promysed were vayne. He taught, that the poze in spirite are blessed, because the kyngdome of heauen abydeth for them. And an other man which applieth al his whole forcast to this end, to enlarge his landes, to buylde royall houses, to enhaunce his rentes, to stiffe his coasers with money gotten by hoke and by crooke, to be aloft in autoritie, to oppresse the poore, and to exercise tyrannie: doeth he not cleane contrary vnto Christ, whose doctrine he maketh a lyar, as much as in hym lyeth. Christ taughte that they are blessed, whiche hungre and thirst after ryghteouines: and an other reposeseth his felicitie in ryot, in the pleasures of the paunche and bely cheare: doeth he not denye Christ? He teacheth, that the meke are blessed, because they shall possesse that heauenly lande, from whence they can not be cast downe. And an other man thinketh him happye, yf he can with oppressing of the poze establishe his owne wealthe. He teacheth that they are blessed, whiche mourne in this world, because euerlasting comforte is due vnto them. And an other man that in all thynges foloweth the delicate pleasures of this world: doeth he not denie Christ? He teacheth, that they are blessed, whiche are mercifull towardes their neyghbours. And this man pleaseth him selfe, because of his owne accorde he doeth him sozo we that is better than himselfe. Christe teacheth that they are blessed, whiche are vexed with reuylng wordes and afflictions for the rightuounes of the Gospelles sake. And this man forcasteth with al maner of dissembling and wyles to please the world. Christe acknowledgeth him for his disciple, that taketh vp his crosse on his shoulders, and foloweth him. And an other man thinketh himselfe neuertheles christen man, if he escape all grief.

Christe sayeth vnto his: *In the vVorlde you shall haue oppression, but in me you shall haue peace:* and yet vnto these men Christ is heauie, & the worlde swete. He commaundet to do good euen vnto a mannes enemye, and au other doth wrong to a man without deserte. Doth not he, that lyueth after such sorte, resistingly denie Christ: his mouth sayeth not agaynst him, but hys life doth. Whan the sonne taught agaynst these maners, the father sayed: *Heare him.* But what sayeth this manne? No, heare not him, it is harde geare that he teacheth, heare the worlde. Therfoze like as he resisteth the sonne, euen so doeth he repugne agaynst the father, and seyng he is of the facion of the worlde, he disfruereth himselfe from the flocke of them, whom Christ hath chosen out of this worlde. Christe hath nothing a doe with this worlde, and he that glueth himself vnto it, repugneth agaynst Christ, and playeth Antichrist, and denieth both the father and the sonne. For the father and the sonne are of an vnseperable societie. Here the Jewe
wyll

Wyll crye with open mouthe agaynste me: I acknowlage the father, but the sonne I acknowlage not. But what soeuer thou trespacest agaynst the sonne, thou trespacest the same agaynst the father. The sonne neuer did nor taughte any thing, but by the auctoritie of the father. He that taketh from the sonne, taketh from the father. Therfoze he that estraugeth him selfe from the felowship of the sonne, he neither pertaineth to the body of Christ, whiche is the catholike church, nor hath felowshipp with God the father, whiche agreeth in all thinges with the sonne. You see with what great Jeoperdie soles disseuer themselves from the sonne. Therefore continue you still in the gospelles trueth, which you receiued first of the surely tried Apostles. Let not the lying tales of the false Apostles drawe you awaye.

If that which ye hearde from the begynnyng shall remaine in you, ye also shall conuynce in the sonne, and in the father. And this is the promise that he hath promised vs, euen eternall life. These thinges haue I writtyn vnto you, concerninge them that deceaue you. And the anoynting which ye haue receaued of him, dwelleth in you. And ye neede not, that anye manne teache you: but as the anoynting teacheth you of all thinges, and is true, and no lye, and as it hath taught you, euen so byde therein. And now babes abyde in him: that when he shall appeare we may be bold, and not be made ashamed of him at his commyng: if ye knowe that he is righteous, knowe also that euery one which doth righteuousnes, is borne of him. The text.

If you continue stedfast in that thyng whiche we deliuered first vnto you, you shall abyde in the felowship of God the father and of his sonne Iesus. If anye man thynke it an harde matter to perseuer in the professyng of the Gospel, because of the afflictions of the wicked, thinke vpon the rewarde. God requireth an harde matter, but the rewarde is greate that he promyseth. For he promyseth nether riches, nor kyngdome, nether the pleasure of this worlde, but lyfe euerlastyng. He that byeth that, byeth it good chepe, although he lose his life for it. These thinges doe I beate vpon, and put you in remembraunce of with so many wordes, beinge carefull, lest the wicked, that are gone from Christ, shoulde chaunce to beguyle anye with theyr sugglynges. Albeit without our warnyng, I thynke the spirite of Christ him selfe teacheth you sufficiently, whom you haue a continuall remembrauncer and teacher in youre heartes. As longe as he continueth still in you, it is no nede, that any man teache you, what you ought to anoyde. He is a secret teacher, but he is the most sure teacher of all other. He beinge once receyued of you, teacheth you of all thinges, like as the sonne hath also promysed. For the spirite is true by nature, and can not lye. Therefore perseuer in that, whiche he hath ones taught you. You holde the ryght doctrine, you remembre it, there lacketh nothing, but that you persist still in it vnto the commyng of Christe, which I suppose, is not farre to. I beseeche you esteemes & agayne, lytle childzen, persist in the doctrine of the spirite, that when our prince and iudge shall appeare, the conscience of a good conuersacion maye geue vs a sure trust in him, and that we maye come forth so, as he be not ashamed to acknowledge vs for hys dysciples, nor we ashamed to come in to his syght. For with what mouth shall we call hym mayster and Lorde, if we haue neyther taken heede to hys teachinge, nor obeyed his commaundement? With what mouth shall we call God father, if we be out of kynde in all our life longe fro his ordinaunces? It is not simple baptisme, but the obserued righteuousnes, that maketh vs the childzen of God. For what shall they heare, that cast out deuilles in the name

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name of Iesu, that tolde thynges before hande, that excelled in miracles: I knowe you not. He taketh the for straigers, in who he seeth not the righteousnes of the gospell. And if you be perswaded, þ God is the autor of thys righteousnes, know this also, that whosoever not with wordes, but with endeouours, doynge and maners accomplysheth the ryghteousnes of the Gospell, he is borne of God, vnto whom he maye with a good conscience pzeace with that boldenes, that obedient childzen are wonte to pzeace to a mercyfull father withall. He wyll acknowlage them that are lyke hym, but those that are not lyke hym, he will not acknowlage.

The.iii. Chapter.

The text

Scholde, what loue the father hath shewed on vs, that we shoulde bee called (and be in dede) the sonnes of God. For this cause the world knoweth you not, because it knoweth not hym. Dearly beloued, now are we the sonnes of God, and yet it doeth not appeare, what we shalbe. But we knowe, that when it shall appeare, we shalbe lyke hym. For we shall see hym as he is. And eueri man that hath this hope in hym, pouergeth hym selfe, euen as he also is pure. Whosoever committeth sinne, committeth vnrightheousnes also, and sinne is vnrightheousnes. And ye knowe that he appeared, to take away oure synnes, and in hym is no synne. As many as byde in hym sinne not: whosoever sinneth, hath not sene hym, neither knowen hym.



Where sincere loue is, there is a trusty confidence, and feare is awaye. See therefore what a notable loue he hath geuen vnto vs, whiche hauing contemned the worlde with his entisements and terrours, perseuer styl in the gospelles doctrine, that we shoulde be named and be, not onely faythfull seruauntes, not onely frendes, but the childzen of God. for so Christ taught, that we should cal vpō the heuēly father, yf we haue nede of any thyng. It is a moste high honour to be called the childzen of God, and a moste high felicitie to be the childzen of God. And forasmuche as we cleaue vnto hym with a constant godiynes, and are acknowlaged of hym, the world acknowlegeth vs not, but abhorreth and curseth vs as sedicious persons. It is no meruayle though the world acknowlage not þ childzē of God, seing it acknowlaged not God himselfe, in that it denieth his soune Iesus: let it nothing trouble your mindes, dearly beloued, that the world esteemeth you as rascalles and abiecte persones. for with God we haue euen nowe thys excellent dignitie, that we are the sonnes of God, and are glad at our heartes, seing in our selues the spirite, not of bondage but of childzen, vpon assured confidence wherof we crye, Abba, father. The dignitie is present, but the dignitie hath not yet appeared. As yet it is the time of batayle, the daye of triumphe is not yet come. That daye shall declare vnto all men, howe greate a dignitie they haue, howe greate a felicitie they haue, that constauntly shewe themselves the childzen of God. It is not yet come to lyght, what we shalbe in the conning of Christ, howbeit we hold thys vpon a sure hope, that as soone as he shall appeare, to rendre vnto eueri one rewardes accordinge to hys dedes, we that were in this worlde companions of afflictions, shall also be companions of the loyes: & we that were lyke hym in the contempte of the worlde, shalbe lyke hym also in the maiestie of glozpe. We sawe hym here in thys world afflicted, and of lowe estate

estate: then shal we see him as he is, and euer was, hygh and excellēt: and so seynge hym we shal also be transformed vnto hys lyknes, not onely in myndes, but also in bodyes. And we see hym nowe, howebeit, as it were through a myll with the eyes of fayth. But then we shal see hym after such maner as cannot be expressed. But that thyng, whiche we shal be than perfectly, we must forcast now in the meane tyme to the vttermost of our possible power. To thintēt we may be like hi thē in glozy, let vs be pure here frō all fylthynges. To thintēt we maye see hym than, lette vs cleanse our eies nowe, lestē when he shall appearē glisterynge bryght, he bee vnto vs more dreadfull than amiable. For he is not fortunatlye sene, but of them that are lyke hym. Therefore whosoever hath thys confidencē in Christe, that he shal than be a companion of his glozy, let hym in the meane tyme pouрге hymselfe with godly studyes cleane from worldlye affeccions, lyke as in hym was no maner of fylthynges of thys worldē, but is all together pure and heauenlye. Therefore it standeth vs in handē with all our possible powers, to bend our endeuours to thys ende, that nothyng remaine in vs of yearthye dregges. And lette no manne flatter hym selfe, sayinge: It is ynough for me vnto innocency, if I trasgresse in none of those thinges that Moses lawe forbyddeth, nor in those thynges that are punyshed by the kynges lawes, as felonye, sacrilege, adultrie, murdye: but all maner of synne is vtterly to be eschewed. For whosoever offendeth by any meane, although he offende not agaynst the prescriptes of Moses, yet he synneth agaynt the lawe of the gospell, whiche is a greate deale holper than Moses law. And for thys cause sake, Christ came once into the world, to shew the waye, whereby his comyng agayne shoulde become hole some and luckye vnto vs. He came to take awaye oyce for all not one synne or two, but al our synnes, where he onely was subiect vnto no maner of synne. He once purged vs frely from all synne, to make vs lyke manered vnto hymselfe, whiche neither any lawe nor any mortall man coulde be hable to do. Through baptisme we are engrafted into hys holy sacred body. But it is our part for all that to endeuour in the meane tyme, that we fall not from our head. We are engrafted through his owne free mercy, but we shal fall awaye, if we slyde backe agayne into oure olde vices. He that abydeth in Christ, perseuereth in innocencye, and is wonderous ware to thynne from all synne, that he maye dayly more and more growe in vertues, and be made more lyke hys head. He that absteyneth not from synnes, although he bee baptised, although he be called a christian, hath not yet sene fully, nor yet knowen hym. For who is it, yf he sawe with the eies of fayth, what greate dignitie it is to be chosen into the numbze of the sonnes of God, and what a fylthy shame it is to be geuen to the father deuyll, that woulde abyde to be plucked awaye from suche a bodye, to departe from suche a father, and to go out of kynde vnto so fylthy a tyrannye, to slyde of his owne accorde awaye from so hygh rewardes vnto so greate miserie?

Babes, lette no man deceyue you, he that doeth righteousnes, is righteous, euen as he is righteous. He that committeth sinne, is of the deuyll: for the deuyll sinneth sence the beginning. For thys purpose appeared the sonne of God, to looce the workes of the deuyll. Whosoever is borne of God, synneth not, for hys seed remaineth in hym, and he can not synne, because he is borne of God. In this are the children of God knowen, and the children of the deuyll. Whosoever doeth not ryghteousnes, is not of God, neither he that loueth not hys brother.

The text.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the first Epistle

Sabes lette no man deceyue you, flatterynge you for your professynge the name of christians, as though that were ynoughe vnto felicitie. He is not iust, that speaketh iustice with his mouthe, but he that in his lyfe and maners doeth iustice in dede, is iuste, lyke as Christe also shewed himselfe in his saynges and doynge an example of all iustice. And he that truly and wholy cleaueth fast vnto him, absteyneth as much as he possible may, from all vncleanes of synnes, and the purenes of maners selfe declareth hym to be the sonne of God, whiche is good by nature, and knoweth no synne. But he that synneth although he haue receyued the sacramentes of Christe, yet he is begotten of hys father the deuyll, whiche is the pryncer and autor of all synne. Him whosoever foloweth, is lyke his father, in that same thing that he synneth in, & declareth hymselfe to be his sonne. God alloweth no felowshyppe with synnes, for he sent his sonne for thys intent into this world, to banquish the woorkes of the deuyll, that is to saye, all thynges, that are contrarye repugnaunt agaynst the charitie of the gospel. Of Adam we are all bozne endaungered with synnes: of God we are bozne agayne by the fede of þe gospels doctrine. As longe as the strenght of this seede abyddeth in a man, he synneth not, neither can synne, that is to wete, because the loue of god byddeth hym naye: whiche loue causeth hym to the studye of well doynge, and calleth hym awaye from all desire of offendynge, in that he is the very true sonne of God: resembling playnly the behauiour and disposition of his father and head. It is not the title, it is not baptisme, it is not the sacramentes that deserue the children of God from the children of the deuyll, but the puritie of lyfe, and charitie, expyessynge and shewing it selfe in wel doinges. It is not idle if it be there. He that sheweth not that, neither sheweth in his dede that he loueth his brother, he is not bozne of God. If he were a lynely membre of Christes body, he woulde haue loued the other membres, for whom Christe died.

The teste

For thys is the tydinges, that ye heard from the beginnyng, that ye shoulde loue one another: not as Cain whiche was of that wyche, and slawe hys brother. And wherfore slawe he him? Because his owne workes were euill, and hys brothers good. meruaile not in byerhan though the world hate you. We knowe, that he are translated from deathe vnto lyfe, because we loue the brethren. He that loueth not his brother abideth in deathe. Whosoever hateth hys brother, is a man slea. And ye knowe, that no man slea hath eternall life abyding in hym. Dearly perceyue we loue: because he gaue his lyfe for us: and we ought to geue our liues for the brethren. But whoso hath thys worlds good and seeth his brother haue neede: and hurteth vp his compassion from hym: how dwelleth the loue of God in hym?

Thys is the summe of Christen iustice: thys is it, that Christe gaue first of all vnto vs: thys is it which we set forth before al thynges vnto you, that you shoulde with louynge one another declare youre selues to be the sones of God, & the disciples of Christ. For in dede the hate of the neighbour is a step vnto murder. And malice is cleane contrarye repugnaunt w charitie. Cain was not the sonne of god, but was bozne of the deuyll: why? because he went out of kynde from his good maker, and became lyke the deuyll, which beyng strycken with enuy, was the first that slawe man with deadly synge. Cain resembled the disposition of his father in slaying Abell hys brother. But what was the cause of hys hate? Forsothe, because their lyfe was not alyke, and therfore they were of a contrarye kynde, albeit after
their

their bodely kinred, they were naturall boyne brethren. They did bothe resemble their father. Abel was an innocēt man, and kyndled to the studious mynde of well dooinge. Cain contrariwysely hauinge conceaued an hate against his brother, forcasted not howe to amende himselfe, but how to slea his brother. Lyke as in this case the wicked coulde not abyde the godlye, and the deuilles childe coulde not abyde þe childe of god, euen so you ought to take it for no maruaile, brethren, though men geuen to the woꝛlde forsake you. They hate them that are giltles. Let no man hate them againe. They, forsomuche as they are bowed vnto deathe, and serue the autoz of deathe, imagine howe to put other to deathe. It is our parte to pitie them, and not to doe them one harme for an other. For in dede the charitie of the gospell hath ledde vs awaye from the studie of harme dooinge, vnto the studie of wel dooing: & by this token we know that we are predestinat vnto euerlasting life, & exempte from the tyranny of death, in þe we loue the brethren. He that loueth, bothe wisheth well & doeth well. The body lyueth by the breathe, the soule liueth by the spirite of Christ. Wher brotherly loue is not, there þe spirite of Christ is not. Whosoever therfore hateth his neighbour, he is deade & lyueth not inwardly. For although he haue a faithe, yet he hath a dead faithe, where charitie is not present. Doe you make a stirre at the hating of your brother, as though it were a light faulte: he that hateth his brother is a mansleare. He hath not thrust his sword in him, he hath not poisoned hi, he hath not flouen vpon him, he hath not cursed him, but onely wished him euill. Mans law doeth not damne him of manslaughter, but in gods sight he is already damned of manslaughter. He þe hath receyued hate ones in to his brest, as much as in him is, he is a mansleare. There are many kyndes of manslaughter: He that sleaeth with sword, suffereth punishment euen by tempoꝛall lawes. He that killeth with poyson, is punished euen of them that are wicked. But he that sicketh his brother with the darte of a benemous tongue, although he be quitte by mannes lawes from the crime of manslaughter, yet by the lawe of the gospel he is gilty of manslaughter. He is as yet hitherto alyue, that the hater wisheth euil vnto, & yet he himselfe is al ready dead: That mans lyfe is safe, & this hath loit euerlastinge lyfe, being his owne murtheour. Wyl you see brethren, howe muche we ought to be farre from the desire of harme dooing. Turne your eyes to the example of Christ. He so loued vs, whan we deserued nothinge, yea whan we deserued deathe, that he spent his lyfe for vs. Howe muche moze ought we to put our lyfe in daunger for the saluaciō of our brethren, yf occasion so require: namely we that succede into Christ our shepherdes rowme. He committed not his shepe vnto Peters keping, but whan he had thysse sayed he loued him, & by and by he sheweth him þe kynde of death, that he might vnderstonde, that the saluaciō of the flocke committed vnto his charge must be defended euen with the losse of lyfe. But wil he spende his lyfe, that grudgeth to helpe with his money: Doeth a mā thinke it inoughe, yf he hurt not his brother, yf he speake to him gently: Christ declared in his dedes, howe muche he loued vs. He þe seeth his brother wāt meate, clothe, drinke or lodging, & hath substauce to releue his nede withal, & is not moued with compassion, but as though it were no poynt of his charge, letteth him alone vnto succoured: how cā it be beleued, þe the loue of god is in him. The heathē succoureth þe heathē, & doest not þe being a Christiā succour thine eue christened.

The Paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the first Epistle

Thou haste professed brotherly loue, and if thou haue it truly present with the, why doeth it ceasse in this case, whan thy brother is pyned with nede? Thou callest him brother, and shewest thou no token of brotherly affectio?

The xxxi

My babes, let vs not loue in word, neither in tong: but in dede in veritic. Wherby we knowe that we are of the veritie, can quyet our heartes before hym. For if our hearte condemne vs, wch is greater then oure hearte, and knoweth all thynges. Dearly beloved, if our hearte condemne vs not, then haue we truste to God warde: and wharsoeuer we aske, we receyue of hym, because we kepe hys commaundementes, and do those thynges which are pleasaunt in hys sight. And this is his commaundement, that we heloue on the name of his sonne Iesus Christ, and loue one another, as he gaue commaundement. And he that kepeth his commaundementes dwelleth in him, and he is him, and hereby we knowe that he abydeth in vs, euen by the spirit which he hath geuen vs.

My babes let vs not loue one another in wordes onely. Let the loue be in the hearte, rather than in the tongue: and let it expresse it selfe in dedes, rather than in speaking. Let this worde Brother be in our dayly communicacion, yea but that we may be true, let the dedes be answerably like to the communicacion: as often as occasion serueth, let vs declare a true brotherly loue to be in vs in dede. Let not our brother want any thing y we haue, whether he desire coate, or meate, or lodging, either coforte, teaching or admonicion. Thus if we doe with readie good willes, we shall knowe by this token, that we are the children of the trueth, and that we loue not countrefaytlye, but purely. The trueth is Christe him selfe, vnto whose eyes we shall proue oure conscience, y we be allowed bothe with God and men: and by our dedes men shall knowe, that there is no dissembled loue among vs: god lokeh by the pritie of the harte. We shall succour our brothers nede, yea but so as we releue his necessitie, not to maintene his riotous prodigalitie: and we shall succour him willingly, without hope of reward to returne vnto vs therfoze, nether for bayne glories sake. Whenne see not the mynde, but the mynde knoweth it selfe, and is seene vnto the eyes of god. If menne prayse vs, and a naughtie conscience condemne vs, howsoeuer we deceaue men, we can not escape the iudgement of God. Mans heart hath secret passages to and fro, and doubtfull lurking holes, but there is nothinge so hidden, and so close, but god pearceth it. He knoweth all thynges better than we: he knoweth our harte that made our harte. He hath eyes in euery place, that is present in euery place. Dearly beloved, yf our harte condemne vs not vnto god, yf our mynde be sincere and vprightly playne, yf we doe of a mere & a pure loue that we doe: suche as we shewe our selues towardes our neighbour, suche a one shall god shewe him selfe to vs. Yf we gladly and with a good wyll forgeue our brother his faulte, God shall easly forgeue vs our synnes also. Yf we readily geue vnto our nedy brother, as often as he desireth our helpe, we shall with a sure trusty boldenes aske also of god, that whiche shall pertaine to saluacion and necessitie, nether shall he denye our askinges. Yf we saye vnto him: *Forgeue vs our trespasses, as Vc forgeue them that trespassed against us*, and yet hate our brother inwardly: shall not our owne conscience by and by crye out against vs? with what face askest thou of god, that whiche thou deniest thy neighbour? with what mouthe askest thou the couenaunt, whan thou thy selfe perfozmeest not the condicion he promised to forgeue vs our trespasses, yea but so that we doe heartely forgeue

forgeue our brother his trespasses. If we saye with the mouthe, I forgeue hym, and yet kepe euill wyll styl in oure hearte: oure naughty conscience shall take awaye our confidence of obteynynge, the thinge that we aske of God. If we bydde our brother gently, *God speake*, and helpe him not whan he hath nede of our helpe, we maye not hope that God will helpe, seinge we helped not our brother. If we turne the deafe eare towards at hys commaundement, he will turne the deafe eare againe towards our prayers. It is a shamelesnes, not a godlynes, to desire fauour of hym, whose commaundementes a man doeth not passe vpon. But and if we obserue his commaundementes, if we doe whatsoeuer shall please him, and so doe, that we may be allowed in his eyes, whiche seeth euery thing: hereof shall we conceaue a sure confidence to obteyne. Here will the Jewe, the superstitious law keeper, saye vnto me: I kepe the sabboth dayes, I am walshen, I faste, I absteyne from forbydden meates, I dooe not steale, God shall heare me. But thys is not the commaundement that I talke of: which chan- for- forthe that we shoulde repose all the whole hope and confidence of oure saluacion in Iesu Christ the sonne of God, by whome the fathers wyll was to geue all thinges frely vnto vs. Is thys ynough now? No forsothe: but we must loue eche one other according to his example. So he commaunded, but that whiche he commaunded, he did first perfoyme himselfe in dede. He doeth not yet truly loue Christe, that hateth the membe of Christe: he doeth not yet loue Christe, that witheth euil to the man, for whome Christe died. Therfore he that kepeth that one only commaundement of loue, kepeth all. With this glue shall we be fast ioyned to Christ, so that he be in vs, and we againe in him. He by hys spirite shall dwell in oure hartes, if charitte bee warme there: The spirite of Christ is not the auto of hate, but the free geuour of brotherly loue. He by the layinge on of thapostles handes is powered in to them that are baptised, but he leapeth backe and flyeth awayne, if charitye happen to bee quenched out. By thys token therfore we shall perceaue that the gifte of the spirit, which we toke in baptisme, abydeth in vs, if brotherly loue contynue with vs still. Like howe muche charitie waxeth colde, so muche will the holy gooste withdrawe him selfe awaye.

The iiii. Chapter.

Dearely beloved, beleue not euery spirite: but proue the spirites, whether they are of god or not, for many false prophetes are gone out into the worlde. Whereby shall ye knowe the spirite of god. Euery spirite that confesseth that Iesus Christ is come in the fleshe, is of god. And euery spirite, which confesseth not that Iesus Christe is come in the fleshe, is not of god. And this is that spirite of Antichrist, of whome ye haue heard, howe that he should come: and euen nowe already is he in the worlde.

Dearely



Have geuen you a token, dearely beloved, whereby you may perceaue, whether the spirite of Christ be in you or not. For there are sondry sortes of spirites in me, yea but dissembling spirites, and naughty spirites. Therfore doe not blindly beleue euery spirite. There are many here and there, that boast them selues to haue the spirite of God, but trye you whether they procede of God or not. Thys worlde hath also a spirite of hys owne, and pretendeth as thoughe it had the spirite of God.

The Paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the first Epistle

The spirite of God enspireth the prophetes, but there are to manye false prophetes now that are gon out in to the worlde, and fallely saye that they speake by the inspiracion of the spirit of God, whan they are ledde with the spirit of the worlde. Will you therfoze haue a more certayne argument of the spirit of God: heare the speaker, and you shali vnderstande. Euery spirite which confesserh, that Iesus Christe the autoꝝ of euerlasting saluacion promysed long a goe vnto the worlde, is now all ready come, hauing receyued a very humayne body, like as he had promysed by his prophetes, he is of God, in that he acknowlageth the sonne of God. Contrary wise he that denyeth this, forasmuche as he is a lyer, he is not of God. For no man doeth truly professe the sonne, onles he be enspired of the father. But those doe not onely denye him, which speake against him in woordes openly, but also they that lye after such a sozte, as though Christe were not the example of godhynes vnto men, or as though he were not the autoꝝ of perfite saluacion: and so they seine some other Messias to be looked for, because Christes doctrine is so muche variable from theyꝝ gredye lustes. If he woulde haue fauoured the voluptuous pleasures of the fleshe, if he woulde haue promysed great substance of riches, if he woulde haue geuen honours and empires of þ world, they wouid haue long a goe acknowlaged their Messias. But now forasmuche as he doeth teache men to despise these thinges, & enticeth them to take by theyꝝ crosse, and teileth that all felicitie must be looked for in the worlde to come, they deny him to be the olde promysed redeemer of mankinde, and bydde loke for an other, that shoulde promyse the comodities of the bodye, and the goodes of this worlde. Nether is it ynough to confesse Christ, onles we confesse him all wholly and entierly. He that dyuideth him, eicher takinge awaye the diuine nature, whiche he hath all one with the father: or the humaine nature, whiche he toke of a woman hys mother, that spirit is not of God, but is the spirit of Antichrist, of the whiche spirit ye haue all ready hearde, that he should come, yea he is now come al ready, and hath to doe in them, whiche being addicte to worldly delices, fight agaynst the spirite of Christe.

The texte

Lyttle children, ye are of God, and haue overcome them: for greater is he that is in you, then he that is in the worlde. They are of the worlde therfoze speake they of the worlde, and the worlde heareth them. We are of God. He that knoweth God, heareth vs: he that is not of God, heareth vs not. We cery knowe we the spirite of verite, and the spirite of erreure. Dearly beloved, let vs loue one another: for loue commeth of god. And euery one that loueth, is borne of God, and knoweth God. He that loueth not, knoweth not god: for God is loue. In this appeared the loue of god to vs warde, because that God sent his onely begotten sonne into the worlde, that we might lyeue thowwe hym. Deceim is loue, not that we loued God, but that he loued vs, and sent his sonne to make agtment for our synnes.

There is no cause why you should be afrayed of these sortes of men, if tell children. forasmuch as you are of god, and haue his spirite: you haue by him overcome the Antichristes. In dede you of youre selues are but weake, but he that dwelleth in you, is greater and myghtier than he, that dwelleth in the worlde. The deuill fighteth agaynst you by hys membez, but God by his spirit defendeth you. They, forasmuche as they perteyne to the fashion of the worlde, and haue receyued the spirite of the worlde, are wisely skilled in the worlde, and talke of worldely matters, and their doctrine is acceptable gear vnto them, which are also geuen them selues vnto the worlde. No man dooeth lyghtly beleue, that he is an enemye to those thinges

things, whiche he vehemently loueth. They loue earthie thynges, & their doctrine sauoureth of the earth. We are of god, he that knoweth hym (in dede he knoweth him that loueth him) herkeneth vnto vs, whiche teache heauenly thynges, & matters worthy of god. He þ̄ is not of god, heareth not vs, but abhorreth fro the gospelles doctrine, which bidderth me geue away their ryches, desyre voluptuous pleasures, to reioyce in afflictions, to esteeme euen life it selfe of no value for righteousnes sake, to loke for the rewarde of well done dedes in the resurrection, which they either beleue shal not come at all, or woulde not haue it to happen: which doctryne comaundeth also throught sincere loue to spend euen a mans liffe for his neighbours sake, where as the man of a worldly spirite prouideth for his owne commoditye at al handes, yea euen with wronging of his brother. By these tokens therfore you may knowe the true spirite of god, from the false spirite of the worlde. Therfore dearely beloued, soasmuche as we are of god, & not of the worlde, let vs loue eche one other, & let euery one serue his neighbours profite rather than his own, for loue is of god. He therfore that is garnished with this loue, is borne of god, & doeth truly knowe god. And he that is boide of loue, hath not yet knowe god, because god himselfe is loue. He geueth him selfe vnto vs, as often as he geueth vs his loue. He hath declared his loue to vs ward, that we should also declare ours towards our neighbour. But some man wil say: we acknowlage the sones charitie, but whereby doe we knowe the fathers loue towards vs? for sothe by this: that he sent his onely sonne, (than the whiche he hath nothing more dearer) in to this worlde, & gaue him vnto death, that we by his death shoulde attayne euerlastyng lyfe. And this is also a greater and a more notable miracle of loue, that beinge prouoked by no good turne of ours, he loued vs so notable. He that loueth his louer agayne, is nothing but thankfull: and shoulde haue no humanitie except he dyd it. We loued the worlde, and were turned from the loue of god: and yet God loued vs fyrst and of hys owne accorde. And when he was iustly offended at oure synnes, neyther was there anye manne vpon yearth the voyde of synne, that coulde reconcile vs vnto hym, (for it behoueth hym to be full of grace, that muste make intercession vnto hym that is offended, for suche as bee malefactoris) he sente hys sonne downe from heauen, to sacrifice hymselfe vnto the father, and with thys most pure oblacion to make hym mercifull vnto vs. What canne be Imagined more notable than thys loue? what can be thought more feruent? what can be imagined more plenteous?

Dearely beloued, if god so loued vs, we oughte also to loue one another. No man hath sene god at anye tyme. If we loue one another, god dwelleth in vs, and hys loue is perfecte in vs. The texte
 By this knowe we that we dwell in hym, and he in vs: because he hath geuen vs of hys spirite. And we haue sene, and doe registre, that the father sent the sonne to bee sauour of the worlde: Whosoener confesseth, that Iesus is the sonne of god, in hym dwelleth god, and he in god. And we haue knowen, and beleue the loue that God hath to vs, God is loue: and he that dwelleth in loue, dwelleth in god, and god in hym. Wherby is the loue perfecte in vs, that we shoulde haue trust in the daye of iudgemente. For as he is, such so are we in thys wyse. There is no feare in loue, but perfecte loue casteth out feare, for feare hath paynfulnes. He that feareth, is not perfecte in loue. We loue hym, for he loued vs fyrst. If a man saye: I loue god, and yet hate his brother, he is a liar. For howe can he that loueth not his brother whō he hath sene, loue god whō he hath not sene? And this commaundment haue we of hym: that he whiche loueth god, shoulde loue his brother also.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the .i. Epistle

Dearely beloued, yf God, whiche hath no nede of vs, of hys owne accord and wyllingly hath so muche loued vs, we ought also after hys example to loue eche one other. The sonne of God shewed hym selfe vnsightly vnto vs, but no man hath sene God the father at any tyme with his bodily eyes, and yet he is perceyued by the euident tokens of thynges. We feele hym angrie, we fele hym mercifull, we fele hym to be absent, we fele hym to be present. We are hable to testifie our mutuall loue towardes God by none other argumente, than yf we loue euery one other, lyke as he hath loued vs. He loued vs frely without cause, he loued vs for thys purpose, to saue vs. Yf we loue eche one other after such wise: god, which is loue, (as I sayed) abydeth in vs. It is a comune loue to beare good wil to him & deserueth well, to loue hym that is hable to requite oure loue, and to testifie our good wil with one good turne for an other: but & loue of god is perfite towardes vs. He loued vs of his owne accord, he loued vs being straungers, he loued vs, of whome no maner requirall coulde returne to hym agayne, he loued vs euē to the losse of his onely begotten sōne. If we loue our neighbour in a semblable wyse, than the loue of God is perfite in vs, declaring also that God hymselfe is in vs. Lyke as all one spirite knytteth the members of the body together, and maketh them one body: euen so the spirite of god doeth in a maner glue together and knytte bothe vs with hym, and euery one to other, and as it were dryueth perforce all into one. And yf the spirite of god, whitch inspireth into our heartes & loue of our neighbour, be stronge in vs, doubtles we knowe by thys token, bothe that we abyde in God, and God lykewyse in vs. Therefore he is an enemy vnto loue, that denieth Jesus to be the sonne of God, whiche gaue hymselfe to redeme mankind. But of this matter we were euen lookers by, we sawe it with our eyes, we hearde it with our eares, we handled it with our handes, and of a matter so many waies prouedly knowē, we beare witness to the whole worlde, that god sent his sonne, to saue the worlde with his death, in case it woulde repent from his olde errors, and ordre the life of it from henceforth accordyng to the rule of the gospell. For he dyd not onely sende hym to saue the nation of the Jewes, but he gaue hym also to be a saviour to all the whole worlde. He therefore that confesseth that Jesus is the sonne of god, whom the prophetes had prophesied before shoulde come, he abydeth in God, and god in him. For he knoweth the trueth, and embraceth loue. He acknowlageth not the loue of God towarde him, that doeth no expresse it in his neighbour. But as for vs, we haue both knowen by experience, and beleue with our harte, and confesse wyth oure mouthe, and expresse in oure workes the dedes that God hath bestowed vnto vs. It remaineth, that we shoulde perseuer in that whiche is begonne, and not to offende, so as God be not bothe plucked awaye from vs, and wee drawen awaye from God. God (as I sayed before) is loue. Therefore he that continueth styll in loue, continueth styll in God, and God lykewyse in hym: because the mutuall knotte of the spirite of God abideth. Wyl you also haue an other token geuen you, whereby you maye trye, whether the loue of god bee perfite in you: If we know our owne conscience to be good, and that we dreade not the daye of iudgement, wherein they shall be seperated from Christ, that haue not folowed Christ. They shall quake, when they shall heare that horrible

rible voyce. *Depart from me* But we looke for that daye with a trusty bolde-
nes, that is to wete, knowing to our selues, þ̄ lyke as he was conuersant
in the world, euen so are we also in the worlde. He toke no maner of spotte
of the worlde, but cleansed the worlde from it owne fylthynes, and drewe
it, as muche as in hym was, into hys purenes. Euen so wee also to oure
powers are not onely not mingled with þ̄ worlde, but also we rather driue
it, with teachyng of the gospell, and chaste examples of lyfe, vnto Christe.
The dreade of goddes iudgemente spryngethe out of an euill conscience.
feare therfore agreeth not with loue. For loue encreaseth assured confi-
dence: which, yf it be perfite, shal dryue quite out of minde al feare. But it is
glad, as often as that daye of iudgemente commeth in his mynde: first ha-
uyng a very good opinion of the good God, and hauing it selfe a good con-
science. Loue causeth gladnes, feare causeth tormentyng sorrowfulnes.
Moreouer he that is afrayed, declareth hymselfe therein not yet to be per-
fite in loue. As much as wāteth vnto loue, so much encreaseth to feare. For
he is afrayed, lest he shall not fynde God the iudge mercyfull vnto hym,
seyng he shewed hymselfe vntractable vnto his neighbour. That daye shal
openly declare, who hath bene a true louer in thys worlde. *We loue God:*
and no meruaile, seyng he first loued vs. For we coulde not be hable to loue
hym, excepte he drewe vs vnto hymselfe with hys loue. Thys same there-
fore, that we loue God, is hys benefite. finally, in that we loue God, we
testifie it in louinge oure neighbour in whome he wyll be loued. If a man
wyll saye: *I loue God*, when he hateth hys brother, he is a lyar. For when
the wycked, of whom for the moste parte they doe not onely not loue God,
but also they beleue not that God is: yet for al þ̄ they after a sort loue their
neighbour, either because he is their kynsman or ailliaunce, or because he is
acquaynted and familiar with them, or at the leaste because man seeth the
other to be a man, lyke as the very bestes loue euery one hys own kynd by
the instincte of nature: howe shall he loue God, whome he hath not sene at
any tyme, whan he hateth hys neyghboure, whom he seeth? Furthermore
howe standethe it together that he loueth God, that passeth not vpon the
commaundementes of God? If a man woulde crye: *I loue the kyng*, and
for al þ̄ setteth naught by the kynges proclamacions, woulde there any man
beleue hym? we haue thys speciall commaundement of oure Emperoure,
that he whiche loueth God, shoulde also loue hys brother, whether he bee
good or badde. Yf he be good, let hym loue Christ in hym: yf he be badde, let
hym loue hym to thys ende, that he maye be conuerted vnto Christ.

The .v. Chapter.

Whosocuer beleneth that Iesus is Christ, is borne of God. And euery one that loueth hym
whiche begat, loueth hym also whiche was begotten of hym. By thys we knowe, that we loue
the children of God, when we loue God and kepe his commaundementes. For thys is the loue
of God, that we kepe hys commaundementes, and hys commaundementes are not greuous.
For all that is borne of God, ouercommeth the worlde. And thys is the victoery that ouercom-
meth the worlde, euen our sayth. Who is it that ouercommeth the worlde: but he whiche bele-
ueth, that Iesus is the sonne of God? This Iesus Christ is he that came by water and bloud,
not by water onely: but by water and bloude. And it is the spire that beareth witness, because
the spire is treuth. (For there are thre whiche beare recorde in heauen, the father, the worde,
and the holy ghost. And these thre are one.) And there are thre whiche beare recorde in (earth)
the spire, the water, and bloude: and these thre are one. Yf we receyue the witness of men, the
witness of Gods greater. For thys is the witness of God (that is greater) whiche he testified

The terte

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the. i. Epistle

of his sonne. He that beleueth on the sonne of God, hath the witness in himselfe. He that beleueth not of God, hath made hym a lyar, because he beleued not the record that god gaue of his son. And this is the recorde, howe that God hath geuen vnto vs eternal lyfe, and this lyfe is in hys sonne. He that hath the sonne hath lyfe: he that hath not the sonne of god, hath not lyfe.

Who soeuer beleueth that Iesus is Christ, that is to say, him of whom we must nedes aske al the succoures of our saluation, and beleueth that in his hearte: he is borne of god, and is called alreedy into the numbze of the sonnes of God: In dede he can not chose but loue, & is a sonne. Thā whosoever loueth him heartely that is & father, loueth him also & was borne of him, that is to wete, his brother, with whome he hath all one commune father. By this tokē we proue, that we doe truly loue & childzen of God, yf we first lone God him selfe heartely. For there is nothing truely loued, except it be loued for his sake. Than that we loue God, it shall euidently so appeare, yf we kepe his commaundementes, and kepe them chearfully and gladly: for his commaundementes are none otherwyse greuous. For what is greuous to the louer: what is greuous to him that goeth post haste to suche maner rewardes. The worlde objecteth terrible appearaunces of euilles, pouertie, banishment, flaunder, enprisonmentes, whippinges, deathes. It is a great fraye, but the victorie is made readye: For what soeuer is borne of God, ouercometh the worlde. But with what furnitures doeth he overcome & worlde: with riches: with garisons of men: with engines of warre: with worldly learning: no, no: they overcome the worlde (as cruelly rageing as it is) throughe a stedfast onely faithe, wherwith they committe them selues wholly vnto God their protectour. Thy riches are snatched awaye, yea but what sayeth faithe to that? *Thou hast a treasure in heauen.* Thou art throuwen out to be a banished man, yea but the countrey of heauen loketh for his countreyman: Thy body is turmoyled with tormentes: yea, but with them, are bought euerlasting ioyes. Death is deuised for the: yea but after it shall folowe lyfe that neuer shall dye. Who is it than that ouercometh the worlde: not a lord, not the riche man, not a philosopher, not a kyng, but he who soeuer he be, that beleueth verely, that Iesus is the sonne of God. Beleue that which he hath promised, and it shall nothing moue thee, whatsover the worlde purposeth against thee. He ouercame the worlde first, & attayne dimortalitye: he came into this world hauig takē our mortal body, to get the victorie for vs, to shew the meane of victorie getting, to cause & rewardes to be certaynely reckoned vpon. But with what furnitures came he armed withall? He came by water and bloude, euen Iesus Christe: by water, that he myght washe vs cleane from our synnes: by bloude, that he myght geue vs immortall lyfe. Hys owne wyll was to be baptised, beinge cleane boyde from all synne, that he myght frely geue vnto vs innocencye: hys owne wyll was to dye on the crosse, that he myght open vnto vs the waye vnto immortalitye. He dyd not onely testifie by these two tokens, that he was Christ and the sauour of the worlde, in that he recepued baptism, as a synfull man: in that he dyed as a malefactor, where he one onely & none among all but he, was Innocent from all synne: but the spirite also appearinge in the likeries of a doue, bare recorde of him, that it was he, whō the father had geuen to be the sauour of the worlde. For the spirite is also the trueth, as the father and the sonne is: there is one trueth of all, like as there is one nature of all.

For there are three in heauen, that beare recoꝛde vnto Chriſt, the father, the worde, and the ſpिरितe: the father, whiche ſending once and eft ſones a voice downe from heauen, teſtified openly, that he is his dearly beloued ſonne, in whom nothing coulde doe amiſſe: the worde, whiche hauing done ſo many miracles, whiche in his death and reſurreccion declared him ſelfe to be the true Chriſt, bothe God and man, the peacemaker betwene God and men: the holy gooſte, whiche deſcended vpon his head whan he was baptiſed, and that after his reſurreccion fell vpon his diſciples. And of theſe three there is all one moſt perfeite agreement: the father is the autor, the ſonne the meſſenger, the holy gooſt the remembrauncer. There are three things alſo on earthe, that beare recoꝛde vnto Chriſt: his humayne ſpिरितe whiche he put from him on the croſſe: the water and the bloode, that ranne out of his ſyde whan he was deade. And theſe three witneſſes doe agree. The other declared him to be God, theſe recoꝛde that he was man. John alſo bare witneſſe. And yf we receyue witneſſe of men, it is reaſon, that the witneſſe of God be of moze impoꝛtaunce with vs. For the teſtimonie of God the father is manifeſt: *This is my vvelbeloued ſonne, in vvhom I am pleaſed, heare him.* What thing can be ſpoken moze plainly or moze fully: he that beleueth truly in goddes ſonne Jeſus Chriſt, and hath repoſed al the ſuccours of his lyfe in him, ſo that truſting in his promiſſes he contemneth all thinges, that this worlde can make a ſhewe of, whether they be amiſſe or dreadfull, hath a witneſſe in him ſelfe, and beareth witneſſe vnto the ſonne of God. For whan (through the inſpiracion of the ſpिरितe of Chriſte) he deſieth euen deathes for his loue, he beareth no triſling witneſſe vnto me, that they are no vaine thinges that Chriſt hath taught and promiſed. He that truſteth not in god, but putteth his truſt in the worlde, he, as muche as in him is, maketh god a lyer, whiche hath promiſed felicitie vnto them that woulde herke vnto his ſonne Jeſu Chriſt: where as he in his conuerſaciō teacheth that felicitie is to be aſked of the worlde, & cleaueth ſo vnto the comodities of this lyfe, as though nothing of a man remayned after the death of the bodye. The father cryeth: *Heare him.* And his lyfe, that beleueth not, ſayeth: *Heare the worlde.* For whan the ſonne prayed the father, that thoſe whiche beleued or ſhoulde beleue in him, might haue eternall lyfe, the fathers voyce was heard, teſtifying as by the ſound of a trompet, that his prayers ſhould be allowed. The father therfore hath geuen vs euerlaſyng lyfe, the winge of whome it ſhould be aſked, euen of his ſonne Jeſus Chriſte. His doctrine who ſoever embraceth, his example whoſoever foloweth, his promiſes whoſoever truſteth vnto, he bothe poſſedeth the ſonne and hath life: the pledge wherof he kepeth in the meane time, euen the ſpिरितe of god, through the vndoubted confidence wherof he is bolde to call God, father: he that is a ſtraunger from the ſonne, is eſtraunged alſo from lyfe.

Theſe thinges haue I writen vnto you that beleue on the name of the ſonne of god, that ye maye knowe, howe that ye haue eternall lyfe, and that ye maye beleue on the name of the ſonne of god. And this is the truſt that we haue in hym: that yf we aſke any thing accordinge to his will, he heareth vs. And yf we knowe that he heare vs whatſoever we aſke, we knowe, that we haue the petitions, that we deſire of hym. If any man ſee his brother ſinne a ſynne not vnto death, let hym aſke, and he ſhall geue hym lyfe ſo that ſinne not vnto death. There is a ſynne vnto death, for whiche ſaye I not that a man ſhoulde praye. All vnihteousnes is ſin, and there is a ſynne not vnto death. We knowe, that whoſoever is borne of god, ſynneth not: but he that is begotren of god, kepeth himſelfe, and that wicked toucheth hym not. We knowe, that we are of god, and the worlde is all together ſet on wickednes. We knowe, that the ſonne of god is come, and hath geuen vs a mynde to knowe hym, whiche is true: and we are in him that is true, through his ſonne Jeſus Chriſt. This ſame is very god, and eternall lyfe. Woe be, hepe your ſelues from images. Amen.

The teſta.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the first Epistle

These thinges therfore doe I repete and beate vnto you with so many wordes, lest any man shoulde perswade vnto you the contrarye. But take it for a sure and an vndoubted certayntie, that it is true whiche you haue beleued: that euerlastyng lyfe is ordayned for you throughe Iesus Christe, whose ioyned felowe heires you are. You haue already the ryght clayme and gage, and shall haue possession of the thyng selfe in hys tyme. Therefore you that beleue in the sonne of God, beleue stedfastlye, and put youre sure trust in hym daylye more and more. He wyll not fayle you in the promyses of euerlastyng lyfe, that fayleth you not nowe euen in thys lyfe. For in dede the spirite of Christe geueth this confidence vnto you, that whatsoeuer you shall aske in the name of the son, you should obtaine it, if ye aske according to hys wyll, that is, yf you be suche when you come to praye as he woulde haue you to come: that is to saye, pure from all maner hate of your brother. (For he obteyneth nothyng at goddes hande, of whom his neyghbour obteyneth not forgiveness of his fault) and yf you aske those thynges that are auailable to the lyfe of heauen, and make to the glorie of Christ. Besides we for the moste parte knowe not what we shoulde aske of God, and many tymes for holsome thynges we desire hurtfull thynges, yf the spirite of Christe put vs not in mynde, what were expedient for vs to aske: but as ofte as we aske after thys sorte, we are sure that god heareth oure prayers: we are sure that he wyll frely geue vs whatsoeuer we shall aske. So hath he promised vs, and is hable to perfoyme whatsoeuer he promyseth, and wyll perfoyme whatsoeuer is holsome for vs. Neither shall he onely encrease his giftes in vs, being prouoked therunto by oure prayers, but also he wyll pardon vs oure daylye offences, without whome the feblenes of mans nature can scarcely be hable to endure longe: and he shall not onely pardon euery one hys offences, yf he desire pardon, but he shall also heare the brother praying for the brothers offences, so that the sinne bee of suche sorte, that it doeth not quenche out brotherly loue, althoughe it doe somewhat obscure it. For there is a synne that cannot bee imputed vnto weakenes, nor be healed with lyght and easye remedies: as whan a manne vpon a sette malyce persecuteth the christen felowshyppe, where he hymselfe hath professed Christe, and in pretence of religion goeth aboute to subuert religio. The desperate frowardnes of suche a one deserueth not the prayer of godly menne: and yet perfite charitie prayeth also for suche, wyshynge for those thynges that cannot possiblye be done. There is no manne that prayeth for the deuyll, because he doeth wittinglye throughe malyce opponge them, whome God woulde well vnto. Perhappes, no prayer should also be made for them, that are translated into hys affection: and are rather to be shunned, that they doe no harme, than to bee releued with prayers, excepte they shewe an hope of their repentaunce. Suche a disease nedeth more strong remedies, and is greater, than can bee taken away by daylye prayers, wherby lighter offences are taken away, which are done of feble weakenes, and not of purposed frowardenes. Whatsoeuer is committed besyde perfite righteousnes, is sin: but there be many differences of synnes. There is some synne, whiche althoughe it demynyssheth and blotte innocencye, yet it vtterlye quencheeth not out christian charytye: as whan by occasion we ouerhote a worde agaynste oure frende, whiche we

we are soꝝy foꝝ by and by that it ouer thot vs:whan a sodayne angre hath rufshed out at a woꝝde, that wee woulde wythe by and by myghte bee called backe agayne: whan throughe the swetenes of meate oꝝ dꝝynke recꝝyuyng, wee take somewhat moze then the necessitie of nature doeth require. And to pardon these offences God is easie, yf he bee called vpon with mutual prayers. Suche maner of faultes of children, those that be gentyll parentes doe foꝝ the moſte parte wynke at, whiche woulde not suffre greater offences. Albeit there is none so lyght a faulte that ought to be neglected. Whatsoeuer is done amysse, is euyl and to bee eschewed of godlye folkes, and yf it bee neglected, it dꝝawethe by lytell and lytell vnto deathe. But lyke as spedye remidy oughte to be had foꝝ these lighter offences, whiche men are scarce hable to auoyde: euen so god foꝝbydde, that he whiche hath once renounced the woꝝlde, and dedicated hymselfe vnto god, shoulde be tumbled backe agayne into anye greate notable cryme. By pꝝofessing of ꝑ gospel we are made the childꝝe of God, and membes of Chꝝist. And it is not conuenient, that the children should diffre so greatly from the father, and the membes from the head. Therfoꝝe he that throughe vnderstandeth, that he is boꝝne of god, taketh moze hede that he doe no euyl, than of deathe it selfe: and kepeth hymselfe that he haue nothyng a doe with that naughtie loꝝde (deuill) whom he serued befoꝝe together with the woꝝlde. Lyke as Chꝝiste beyng once dead rose agayne to lyfe, and rose agayne to lyfe neuer to dye any moze: euen so he that throughe baptysme is once dead vnto the woꝝlde, and risen agayne to newnes of lyfe with Chꝝist, it is not mete foꝝ hym to doe that thyng agayne, foꝝ the whyche Chꝝiste must dye agayne. Let them be affrayed of the woꝝlde, whiche are not truly boꝝne agayne of god: whiche haue not with al the pith of their whole heartes receuyed the seede of the gosselles doctrine. We knowe, that wee are truly of god, whome neyther the euyl thynges noꝝ the good thynges of thys woꝝld can seperate from Chꝝiste. The whole woꝝld is set all together on naughtnes. Whiche waye soeuer a man turneth hym, there is occasion offred of thynges to turne vs awaye quite from the innocent vpryghtnes of lyfe. But from the woꝝldes enchauntmentes the sonne of god hath once deiuyered vs: whiche came into the woꝝlde foꝝ thys cause, to exempte vs out of the contagious infection of the woꝝlde. He hath dꝝyuen awaye the darkenes of oure foꝝmer ignoꝝaunce, and hath geuen vs an vnderstandyng that is lyghtened with the lyght of the gossell: to thintent we should knowe the true god & the free geuer of al righteousnes: who onely had nothyng a doe with the woꝝlde: and we are in hym truly, in that we folowe hys doctrine and pꝝomysses with an vpryght conscience, as longe as wee are in hys sonne Iesus Chꝝiste, whome he sent into the woꝝlde foꝝ that intent. He is the true god, whiche onely ought to be honoured: and the true lyfe, whiche onely oughte to bee desyꝝed. Lytell chyldꝝen, yf you doo truly knowe the true God, beware of false goddes, and bayne Images, whyche the woꝝlde hath in honoure. He wurshyppeth an Idole, that maketh moneye hys God. He wurshyppeth an Idole, that maketh hys bely hys God. He wurshyppeth an Idole, that foꝝ woꝝldelye honoures sake, despysethe the commaundementes of God. There be manye suche

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kyndes of Images. Beware you of all, yf you wyll abyde in the vour stype
of the true God. & by che humble prayer of myne he vouchesafe to
make good, by whose goodnes wee are deliuered from
oure erreures. Amen.**

**Thus endeth the Paraphrase vpon the fyrste
epistle of Saince John.**